

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE UPDATE

APRIL 29, 2002

The state of Illinois has placed a ban on the import of deer and elk into their state. This is an emergency 150-day ban while they work on a permanent regulation.

Acting Food and Drug Administrator, Dr. Lester Crawford, has called for the eradication of CWD. He called for increased federal funding and research in the fight against the disease. He stated; "There's every reason to be concerned. It is important we control it and confine it now that we have the opportunity". His biggest fear is that it will jump to the nation's cattle industry.

Dr. William Hueston, Director of the Minnesota center for Animal Health and Food Safety at the University of Minnesota has called for federal action to restrict the shipping of domestic deer and elk. Dr. Hueston stated that the patchwork of regulations across the nation is not working to contain CWD and federal action is needed now.

The carcasses of all four missing elk have been found on the Edwards DCA property. Because they were not observed when they died, and brain stems were not collected, they will be traced as if they were infected.

Wisconsin has announced plans to reduce the deer population around their CWD positive area by 90%. They have authorized landowners, beginning May 6, to kill deer within a 22 mile circle around the location of the positive wild deer near Mt. Horeb. The estimated deer population in this area is 20,000 animals.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture has implemented a one year ban on the import of any deer and elk into their state. The ban will be in place for one year with a full review in six months. The Department of Agriculture worked with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to institute this ban.

At the recent NE Assn. of Fish & Wildlife Agencies meeting, the Directors passed a resolution recommending that every one of the 13 states in the NE declare a moratorium on inter-state movement of Cervids. It is generally conceded that sampling will show CWD to be present in PA, and possibly, NY. PA had a "funny" anecdote of a game warden observing 4 deer in one herd that were staggering, salivating, and holding their head at an odd position. He shot all 4, and no samples were taken. Look for emergency closures on importation in NH and VT very soon, and CT, MD and MA in the near future. (From Scott Williamson of WMI)

Two young men in Michigan have died from what doctors diagnosed as classic CJD, the human form of TSE. An investigation by the Center for Disease Control indicates that neither of the men had eaten venison or had visited a country where mad cow disease occurs. Current theory is the both men had the inheritable form of the disease although there is no history of dementia in either family. Investigations are still underway.